

THE

# SPIRITUAL TIMES

A WEEKLY ORGAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF SPIRITUAL AND  
PROGRESSIVE TOPICS,

A REGISTER OF PASSING SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA, AND A MISCELLANY  
OF SPIRITUAL LITERATURE.

Spiritualism unfolds to our internal senses substantial realities; it presents us not only with the semblances, but with the positive evidences of eternal existence, causing us to feel that the passing shadows we speak of belong not to the Spiritual, but to the Material world. It is easy to imagine that we are dealing with the absolute and enduring, because we associate our thoughts with the external and apparently lasting, but, on reflection, we discover that the only absolute and enduring facts are beyond the tomb.

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"The life that now is shapes the life that is to be."

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

## The Spiritual Times.

SATURDAY, JULY 30, 1864.

### SPIRIT VERSUS MATTER.

Our materialistic friends who imagine they settle the spiritual question at once, by demanding what they term unmistakable demonstrable evidences of the *existence* of Spirit, ought to look to it lest they themselves should be called upon to give unmistakable demonstrable proofs that there is, and can be, nothing but Matter. If the proofs of spirit existences must be unmistakably demonstrable to the mere materialistic senses before it can be admitted that they are unmistakably demonstrable to the spiritual vision, there will, of course, be little chance of agreement between opposing minds. Every day we hear people shout for "ocular demonstration;" but they never enquire how much they themselves believe of material operations, without ocular demonstration, or even to reflect on the one patent fact that Progress supposes degrees of knowledge, and that whilst there are the two ends and middle—the unknown, the known, and the unknowable—in human experience, there is of necessity a demand for humility that wisdom may be reached. We deny that Spiritualism is a vague, misty, indefinable, and indefensible sort of thing, because its phenomena and its philosophy alike accord with fact and reason. We grant that facts of an ultra-mundane character are like the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs—dead letters to the materialist who is only willing to accept facts that come within the cognizance of his five physical senses. Take away spirit, and the universe is a body without a soul: take away spirit, and man becomes a material worshipper—a kind of heathen idolator. Fill the heart with images and pictures of a purely material character, and the soul's highest aspirings will reach only to matter. We all worship something, although we may think otherwise—either the spirit or the form. Of all kinds of worship that which is purely material is the most degrading. Our lives, like jewels, require setting in caskets.

There are men whose great self-conceit sets themselves up as the sole objects worthy their own adoration. There can

be little or no spiritual joy in such men. They walk about treading down the flowers, and collecting dry husks. Their minds are museums filled with all dead things; the spiritual, which is the only absolute living reality, lives with the life which lives eternally in beauty and truth. For them Nature is a mausoleum, which, sooner or later, will bury their hopes, and all that is theirs. The spiritual messengers come to us with heavenly commissions to stimulate our faith, and lead us to God. Let the cold, calculating physical philosophers, who would reduce the immortal part of man to a mere science of dead figures, treasure their pet, unholy, soulless dogmas. May they find the philosopher's stone. For ourselves, we desire less calculation and more love—less self-concentrativeness, and more reliance on the great presiding Spirit of spirits. We do not mean by this to set aside the necessary practical operations of social life; but we would make them subservient to the ends for which they are designed, and not allow our hearts to gravitate down to them, so that the levitating law of divine love may have no possible chance of operating to our eternal profit. Whilst we supply food for the body, we should not forget the spirit; if we do, we close up the avenues to spiritual holiness, and circumscribe our own souls. It is not enough that men acquiesce in a negative manner; but they require a positive faith in the spiritual life to fit them for true life service, both here and hereafter. Spiritualists have more than the satisfaction that, if they are children of mystery, so are the materialists. Spiritualists know well enough that all attempts to explain the Infinite must result in failure, albeit they have a living faith in the great Infinite. The facts which have given them satisfaction have been numerous and stubborn, although opponents may not accept them as such. Belief silently works in a thousand channels. Where conviction obtains its first impulse may not be easily seen, and oftentimes the "reason why" may be very obscure. Nevertheless, the inward life of the spirit may be improved. It is in vain that men yeapt philosophers enter the laboratories of science, and mathematically treat the "science of man," measuring the possibilities of life with a piece of tape, or a pair of callipers. What we know, let us assert; what we may know, let us discover; what is unknowable will ever limit our mental researches. It would be the height of presumption for finite man to attempt the comprehension of the Infinite God. All effects to the finite comprehension inevitably result from causes. Thus we trace back, Paley-wise, effect to cause until we arrive at the Causer. But here we are lost. Infinity overwhelms us. We dare not pursue



the logic lest we create a theological Frankenstein which shall haunt us to the grave, and rob us of hope, faith, and charity. We perceive illimitability, but cannot comprehend it, being ourselves limited. What our limits measure we do not know; but we see progress in almost everything, and especially in our own microcosm. Therefore we argue thus: Being progressive we are necessarily limited, or we have no need of progress. Ever aspiring, we shall gain expansive measures of knowledge; but the more we know, the capacities for still greater knowledge will be enlarged. Yet still the *unknowable* will exist, or we shall be perfect, and, being perfect, no longer progressive.

It is right that we improve the arts and sciences in order that the material comforts of life may be realised for all mankind; but it is wrong to make Matter a god, and Science its high priest. Where is the man who can propound the "science of man" in such a way as to prove that Matter is the one great Deity, and that nothing of a spiritual character can exist outside the chimeras of priests, or the imaginings of maniacs? Echo, answer! The Materialist says he must have facts cognisant to his physical senses, and that he cannot believe there can be anything supernatural or spiritual. We, perhaps, give him facts of a hard, physical nature. Heavy tables and sofas rise in mid-air in his presence, and intellect of an independent character is perceived. He says there *must* be some *mechanical contrivance, involuntary pressure, &c.* at work. We prove to him that neither the one nor the other is the "performer." He then says, "Well, it is only Magnetism." Magnetism may be an agent; but who or what uses it? What does our materialist say to this? Like poor Sir David Brewster, he exclaims, "Spirit is the very last thing I will give in to;" or like the assiduous Professor Pepper, replies, "I do not wish to be convinced." Thus the Spiritualist confounds the materialist, and holds not only by the facts but the logic as well. It is always difficult to talk or even laugh people out of their ignorance. They seem to regard their narrow vision above price, and would not, for the world, see beyond the brick walls of their philosophies. We heard a professor, who shall be nameless, declare that man's soul could not commit sin; but that the culprit was his "nervous organization." Hence, after this profound philosophy, we must not suppose progress for the disembodied spirit; that should go to the highest heaven at once, whilst the "nervous organization" "lies in cold obstruction." Truly Materialism is hard-driven that one of its teachers should reason himself into such a maze. Does not science teach her votaries to improve those ascertainable means which will give health and happiness? Does it teach the guiding principle, spirit, soul, or the "nervous organization" to do this? Verily the "dry bones" of materialism need much shaking, and are destined to receive such from the modern forms of the old spiritual truth, which is knocking at the doors of scepticism and infidelity, inside and outside the Churches. If a man's "nervous organization" is to be accredited with responsibility, instead of the soul or spirit, which makes it a tabernacle only, we see no reason why the flesh, or bone, or blood of the system may not be accountable likewise. It is in vain that learned Professors invent their material tests for the settlement of this spiritual question. To touch even the spirit of the subject requires spiritual insight. Those who possess it not may feel themselves annoyed, but let them not insist that, if they are unconscious of possessing it, they always will be, or that none others are amongst the favoured spiritually-gifted.

#### SPIRIT MESSAGE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is permitted me to write for you to-day, and to impart the following intelligence. Truth is divine, and all who steadily look for the truth shall find it. Look and see; search and find. Remember our Saviour's words, "Knock and it shall be opened; ask and ye shall receive." If ye ask your Heavenly Father for wisdom and grace, think ye he will not hearken to your prayers—that he will not heed your endeavours to see clearly, and perceive, and understand? God created the world, and finally men and women. When sin had crept in and defiled their hearts, God gave his only begotten Son, that through him all might live again. By giving his Son eternal life, Christ could again give the precious gift to all who believe, and are willing to receive the blessing. God the Father gave you life on earth; the Son gave you life eternal. Without the Son, God could not give salvation, and therefore was the Son created. For thousands of years had the Saviour been expected and foreshadowed, yet were the nations not prepared or willing to receive him when he came. They looked for glory and renown, and overlooked the lowly meekness that came of humble birth, and sought not for dis-

tinction or riches. Remember God has given to each the truth in the person of the Saviour—the light to lighten the Gentiles. Be not blind; see it, receive it, and doubt not. The prophets prophesied of Christ; John the Baptist foretold his coming; yet the Saviour was doubted, and is doubted. Worship the truth; discard all bygone prejudices. Look to God alone, and endeavour to see and perceive the simple truth that, at your birth, ye received of God a divine spark, and this spark is enough to light you on your way rejoicing, if ye will not shut your eyes and clog your mind with old ideas. God is a God of love, and truth, and simplicity. He created all to live, and have eternal life; not to die, and be punished. Think on the beauty of the world; wherefore should God destroy it? Ponder on the form and intelligence of mankind, and never think that God wills men should suffer. All suffering is inharmonious, and destroys the energy of mind and body. God wills that men should live and bring their minds to perfection. In order to do this, Nature must be followed and obeyed. Disregard the laws of Nature, and suffering is the consequence. Infringe but one prerogative, and suffering is entailed—your energies are crippled and maimed. While thus suffering, some murmur against God, and others again as blindly fancy it is an infliction, or chastisement sent by God for some especial purpose. The Creator never interferes with the laws of Nature, and man should study health, and never neglect his body, and thus impair his powers of progression and usefulness. By this carelessness, not only do men and women suffer in themselves, but they entail it on their children. Never lose sight of the words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Help all who suffer in mind or body. A cheerful mind is conducive to health; a fretful, repining mind acts on the stamina of life, and weakens it. By shortening your stay on earth you impede your development in the life to come. Your Heavenly Father prepared you an earthly home, and also a celestial mansion. In all things, love—unceasing love—is shown. Christ preached the gospel of love and good fellowship to all mankind, yet how few heed his doctrines. Let each strive to do his utmost. Never think it is vain. Do your own work; leave nothing to others. Hide not your talent in a napkin, but put it forth to usury. Be kind, and gentle, and lenient to the faults of others. Ever keep in mind, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Soon you will feel happier, and see clearer. Never believe that divine truths are mysteries, or incomprehensible. "God said let there be light, and there was light." Our Saviour said, "I am the light." Look on him, therefore, and seeing the light, believe on it. Let it shine on all, and guide you in all and everything. Study the title as a child, believing that all is plain, and soon all mists made by mankind will clear away. The word was spoken for all—for babes and sucklings, yet the pride of many blinds them as with a veil; yet to all is the truth revealed in Christ, that all might see and comprehend.

Given through the mediumship of LOTUS.

Feb. 4th.

#### SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA.

##### LETTER II.

##### Phenomena developed at Circle Meetings.

##### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EMPIRE."

SIR,—The following report of phenomena, which I have had an opportunity of observing, will add, more or less, to the evidence adducible in favour of the truth of Spiritualism.

In the month of February, 1862, a circle was formed thus: Six persons seated themselves round a common cedar table and placed their hands on the surface of it, in the way that is common at the circle-meetings of the Spiritualists; that is to say, each person touched with their little fingers the little fingers of those on either side of them, each person's thumbs being at the same time in contact. A small and continuous circle of living flesh was thus formed on the face of the table.

Whether this particular mode of forming the circle was necessary to the development and manifestation of spirit power, or whether it even conduced to the manifestation of that power, are questions which I will not attempt to decide, my object being to state what we did, and what occurred in our presence, rather than attempt to explore the mysteries of the process we adopted, or assign the reasons which led us to adopt it. If we had not formed the circle in this way, but had simply placed our hands upon the table, most probably our experiments would have been equally successful.

We had not sat many minutes before the table began to crack in a strange and curious manner, the sounds at first resembling a faint tick and afterwards increasing in loudness, so as ultimately to become distinctly audible to all persons in the room. One of the ladies present asked if the person, or thing that was rapping, was a spirit, and the response consisted of a number of raps, which we interpreted to be an affirmative answer. The following dialogue then occurred between the rapping agent, and the members of the circle:—

Mr S.: "Will you answer our questions by giving three raps for YES, and keeping silence for NO?"

Spirit: "Three raps (meaning YES)."

Five members of the circle then asked successively whether the spirit while in the flesh, had been related to them, but the invisible dialogist maintained strict silence, which we understood to be an answer in the negative to each questioner.

"Are you relation of mine?"—"Yes."

"I will name several degrees of relationship, and should I mention that which you sustained to me will you please to rap?"—"Yes."

"Were you my father, sister, brother, nephew, niece, aunt?"—"No."

"Were you my uncle?"—"Yes."

"Were you, or are you, my Uncle James, Alexander, William?"—"No."

"Are you my Uncle John?"—"Yes."

"I will mention the names of different kingdoms and countries; and when I name the country in which you died, will you please to rap?"—"Yes."

"Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, America?"—(Silence.)

"Scotland?"—"Yes."

"Did you die a natural death?"—"No."

"Did you by violence?"—"Yes."

"Were you killed by a bludgeon, shot, poisoned, or murdered in any other way?"—"No."

"Were you drowned?"—"Yes."

"What age were you when your body died? Give a rap for each year."—"A shower of raps came on the table so rapidly that we could not accurately count them."

"Were you 40?"—"Yes."

"Fifty, Sixty?"—"Yes."

"Were you seventy years of age?"—"No."

In answer to questions put in this way, we obtained the additional information that our invisible friend was between sixty-four and sixty-five years when he was drowned.

Towards close of this *séance* the writer's son asked the spirit to give one distinct knock as a test of its existence, and as a proof of its ability to understand his question, and one distinct rap was heard on the table. Louder said the lad, and the rap was repeated in a louder tone. Louder still said youth, and then there came a moderately heavy thud on the under side of the table. This closed the *séance*.

I may here that I had an uncle of the name of John, from whom I have not heard for more than thirty years. When I last heard of him he was in America. If he is dead, I neither know the place where he died, nor the mode of his death. For aught, therefore, which I know to the contrary, the information which I received from the invisible presence respecting him may be true. I have, however, no means of ascertaining whether it was true or false.

Although at the commencement of the *séance* we sat round the table, yet, when spirit-power began to be manifested, we all stood up, and it was whilst we were standing that the greater part of the raps were heard. None of us had any reason to suspect that any of the rest would be guilty of playing off a hoax, but, nevertheless, we watched each other as closely as possible, in order that we might detect a physical and ordinary cause for the sounds we heard. (The culprit however remained invisible. During the time the rappings were being produced the hands of all persons in the party were on the table, nor was there any appearance whatever of anything like a trick. The sounds obviously proceeded from some cause outside of ourselves, and over the operations of which we had no control.

The phenomena we had witnessed were so strange and wonderful that they very naturally excited in us a desire to witness them again, and to know more about them. Accordingly, on a subsequent evening we assembled, and after forming the circle, the rappings commenced, and were just as demonstrative as they had been at our first *séance*. We asked the rapping agent to give one rap at each of the letters of its name, whilst we repeated the letters of the alphabet, and in this way we got slowly spelled out the name E-I-I-Z-A K-I—the name obviously being unfinished. Strangely enough, one of the ladies in the circle, and whom we have ascertained to be the medium, had an aunt, recently deceased, named Eliza King. The following colloquy then occurred:—

"Does space affect you as it does us, that is are you related to it as we are?"—"No."

"Can you go to London in five minutes?"—"Yes."

"Will you please go there to—street No.—, and ascertain how Mrs. N—is?"—"Yes."

"Have you been to London?"—"Yes."

"How is Mrs. N—? Is she well?"—"No."

"Is she ill?"—"Yes."

"Is she very ill?"—"Yes."

"Will she die of her illness?"—"No."

"Will she recover?"—"Yes."

At this stage of the proceedings, two of the ladies became alarmed, and the *séance* terminated. This *séance* was held on the 16th of February, 1862.

The next circle meeting took place on the following Saturday. A gentleman, connected with a banking establishment, was present at it, and took part in the proceedings. The following dialogue then took place:—

"Can you tell us anything about the Salsette, the missing mail steamer?" (meaning the Bombay, because we laboured under a misapprehension as to the name of the steamer.)—"Yes."

"I will mention various causes of detention, and should I mention the right one, will you please to rap?"—"Yes."

"Has she taken fire? Has she been wrecked? Has she sunk? Has she been detained by storms, heavy weather?"—"No."

"Has the delay been occasioned by imperfect machinery?"—"Yes."

"Are you sure that imperfect machinery has been the cause of the delay?"—"Yes."

"When shall we receive in Wollongong a telegram of English news? On the 22nd, 23rd, 24th?"—(Silence.)

"Shall we receive it on the 25th?"—"Yes."

"Are you sure of that?"—"Yes."

On the 25th of February, we did receive a telegram of English news contained in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of that date, and which was received via Melbourne, from the Mauritius. Strange to say also, the Bombay, steamship, was detained through imperfect machinery, for she

broke her screw on the voyage, and had to put into the Mauritius for repairs. Those who were present at the *séance* understood that the telegram which the spirit said would be received on the 25th, was to contain the news brought by the Bombay's mail. This, however, was purely an inference of our own, and was not stated by the invisible interlocutor.

At this *séance*, a very curious phenomenon occurred. The agent that was answering our questions sometimes seemed to lack power to make the table crack—or, at least, I supposed that it lacked that power, because of the length of time it took to answer the questions we put to it. At length, a question was put, and we were all anxiously waiting for a response, when some strange influence began to affect my hands and arms causing them to become stiff, rigid, and catalepted, and pressing them down with great force upon the table. Whether this rigidity or spasm of the muscles was occasioned by some obscure kind of automatic mental action, or by animal magnetism, or by electricity, or by Reichenbach's odic force, or by reflex nervous action, or by the agency of a spirit, I leave others to determine; but *certainly*, whatever may have been the cause, the effect was to me extremely curious and interesting. It seemed to be produced by something outside of myself, operating in conjunction with abnormal volitional impulses so obscure as to be almost imperceptible to consciousness. Although I knew and felt that I could stop this effect by a direct act of my will, I nevertheless allowed my hands to operate without check or hindrance and watched the result with much interest. When the rigidity in my arms had reached what appeared to be a culminating point, and began to produce slight pain, my hands rose involuntarily from the table, made a few mesmeric passes over it, and then slowly rising about a foot, or a foot and a-half above it, remained stationary. All this might have been automatic, that is to say, might have been produced by some obscure action of my own brain; but what followed and which seemed intimately related to this supposed automatic action, must have been produced by something distinct from myself. Whilst my hands were held over the table, the latter began to crack, and then an affirmative answer to the question we had proposed was rapped out. This occurred repeatedly, and uniformly with effect, excepting in one instance, in which the rapping agent would not give a response, until my hands were brought within an inch or so of the table, when a distinct rap was produced immediately beneath them; again they rose and descended, and a third rap was heard; the three raps thus constituting an affirmative answer to our question. While these raps were being produced, no part of my person was in contact with the table, nor did my clothes touch the wood of it in any place. The raps seemed to be produced in the wood, at the edge of the table, immediately beneath my hands, and were heard only when my hands were brought close to the table. During the time this pantomimic and apparently ridiculous performance was taking place, I remained as passive as possible, and allowed my faculties to be made use of by another; but I watched the changes that took place in myself very narrowly, and fancied that I was able to discriminate that portion of the effect that was produced by my own agency, from that portion that was produced by the agency of another. If it be assumed that the spasm, or rigidity of my muscles was produced by purely automatic action, how can the production of the raps be explained; and more especially, how can we account for the bewildering fact that purely automatic action caused an unintelligent substance to manifest intelligence?

At our next circle meeting we did not obtain any manifestations of spirit-presence; although the same persons that were present at the previous meetings, were present at this, and the circle was formed in the customary manner.

Early in March we again met to test the matter further. When I sat down to the table I had some doubts on my mind as to the mode in which the raps had been produced. I thought that perhaps after all they might not have been produced by spiritual agency, but rather by ourselves; that we might have unconsciously pushed the table, and so caused it to crack; that we knew, or fancied that we knew the answer to each question; and that the dominant thoughts of our minds imperceptibly influenced the pressure effected by our hands, and so caused the table to crack at the proper time, so as that the raps should appear to form intelligible answers to our questions. This pretty little theory was put to flight by the very first rap we heard. That rap seemed to be levelled at my doubts. Instead of being made on the table it was made on a piano which stood in the room, and which was not in contact with any of the persons present at the *séance*. We were all so situated that none of us could touch the piano without all the rest perceiving that we did touch it. The medium was seated with her back towards it, while her hands were on the table, the hands of all the rest being on the table also, all persons present being more than a yard from any part of the instrument. While thus situated the raps came on the piano just as we wished, in twos, or threes, or singly, or in any other mode we pointed out. We inquired the name of the spirit that was rapping, and the raps spelled out "Collins," and then in answer to our question—What is your other name "Col," was made out, which was all the information we could get. We asked then if the second name was finished, and were told that it was not. The spirit then promised to meet the writer in that apartment, on the following afternoon, at five o'clock, and to communicate with him; but, although he attended at the time and place appointed, he received no manifestation of any kind; so that, if the spirit was really there, it was either unwilling, or, perhaps, unable to perform what it had promised. At this meeting the raps were heard on the piano at first, but towards the close of the *séance* they were requested to come upon the table, and they did so.

On the 26th of March we formed a circle at the medium's house. We soon heard the raps. They came upon the table, on the ceiling, on a chest of drawers, on a second table that was in the apartment, and on the back of the chair on which the medium sat. The medium averred that she felt distinct knocks and touches on her back. My arms were strangely affected, being pressed down with great force upon the table

then raised from it as if by some unearthly attraction the table meanwhile oscillating, and cracking, and tipping, more like a thing half alive than an inanimate substance. Every time that my hands rose off the table, it followed them along the floor for nearly half a yard, and then returned to its former position at my command. Possibly I produced a mesmeric effect upon the members of the circle whose hands were on the table, causing them to push the table after me when my hands were raised from it, and to pull it back to its former position when I commanded it to return there. I do not, therefore, regard the phenomenon as a conclusive proof of spirit agency. The raps, however, were unmistakably produced by an invisible intelligence because they answered our questions. A spirit purporting to be related to the medium was asked what it died of, and then was spelled out by the means of the alphabet, "Age." Another spirit told us that it was a year old when it entered the land of spirits, and it gave its initials; the length of life stated, and the given initials corresponding to the circumstances connected with the death of an infant related to the medium. The following is a portion of the dialogue that was carried on.

"Can you bring the spirit of Dr M——y, formerly of Maitland, and recently deceased, into the room?"—"Yes."

"Is he here now?"—"Yes."

"Will he communicate?"—No answer could be got to this question, nor could we obtain any farther communications of any importance.

"Will the English mail reach Wollongong to-morrow morning (that was the morning after the *seance*)?"—"No."

"Will Mrs S. receive a letter from England by the mail?"—"Yes."

"Will she receive the letter to-morrow?"—"No."

"Will she receive it on the following day?"—"Yes."

This information was incorrect. I knew at the time it was given that the English mail would reach Wollongong on the following morning, and hence felt surprised at the rapping agent stating that it would not. I had received English papers brought by the Bombay steamer, and, therefore, knew that the mail was in Sydney, and that it must be down in due course on the following morning. Mrs S. did receive a letter, but not at the time the rapping agent stated she would. The spirit clearly fell into a mistake, or else we misunderstood it, or it misunderstood us. Had there been any thought-reading in the case, the rapping agent would have seen, by looking into my mind, that the mail would certainly arrive on the following morning.

In the early part of April, I invited a number of ladies and gentlemen to come to my residence on a particular evening, for the express purpose of witnessing manifestations of spirit presence, in order that they might be convinced of the truth of Spiritualism by the testimony of their own senses. I found out, however, that I had reckoned without my host. We formed a circle, and called the spirits from the vasty deep; but they would not come to us. There were manifestations certainly, but they were of a very refined and delicate nature, and very far from being sufficiently broad and glaring to attract the notice of sceptics. A few of the gentlemen who attended on that occasion, assembled on the following evening, and sat in circle for about half-an-hour, without the medium being present, and without obtaining any indications of spirit presence.

On two subsequent occasions, I had opportunities of testing these mysterious rappings, and on each of these occasions, I received indubitable evidence of the presence of an unseen intelligence. In both cases, the raps were produced away from the medium, as well as close to her, on the table, on the walls of the room, on the matting that covered the floor, on a child's chair, and on the back of the medium's chair. None of us could have produced these raps, without the others detecting the trick, unless, indeed, some sort of machinery had been employed for the express purpose of imposing on the credulity of the circle. As the *seance* took place in the writer's parlour, any machinery that was there must have been there with the writer's cognizance and sanction, and could not have been there otherwise. But it is unnecessary to pursue this ridiculous supposition any further.

I may here remark that raps, cracks, and noises can be made by anyone, even by a child, and can be made, too, in such a way as that they shall appear to answer questions. These noises can be made voluntarily, and, perhaps, are sometimes made involuntarily by persons sitting in circle; and in either cases are, doubtless, often mistaken for veritable spirit raps. But they are quite distinct from the rappings of spirits, and can scarcely be confounded with these rappings by anyone who has heard both. The slipping of the skin of the hand, along the surface of the table, slight pressure producing almost imperceptible motion in the table itself, the movement of the body in the act of breathing, the creaking of the chairs owing to the rocking of the bodies sitting on them, the slipping of the foot in the boot, or of the boot against the leg of the table, will respectively produce noises, and creaks, and raps, and those who like to play at the game of imposture may by these, or other means, deceive people, and make them receive ordinary sounds as manifestations of spirit presence and power. All these sounds are localised and easily detected. They will not move away from the place where they are first produced, when you wish them. If the raps are produced by the creaking of the chair in the first instance, the chair must continue to produce them, otherwise they will cease to be heard. All this must be obvious. Spirit raps, however, will, as a general rule, be made in any way the members of the circle choose to dictate. Sometimes, indeed, they are made quite contrary to the wishes of those present, and quite out of the reach of everyone in the room, thereby showing that the agent that makes them is independent of human control. I have heard them made on a ceiling which no one standing on the floor could touch.

It appears to me that the only way of testing the truth of Spiritualism is to put the question to Nature—that is to experiment. To sit round a table giggling, laughing, cracking jokes, and deriding Spiritualism and Spiritualists, as I have seen many do, and as I have often done myself, is not the way to discover the truth. The facts of

Spiritualism are circumstanced exactly like the facts of the physical sciences. The chemist, or the electrician, observes a fact and makes a statement about it; and that statement is believed because there is no reason to doubt its truth, and because everybody knows that any man can test the truth of the alleged fact whenever he likes. Hence hundreds of facts are believed solely on the evidence of one or two persons. In fact, the belief of a large portion of mankind in what is popularly called physical science, is neither more nor less than a blind and unintelligent faith. It is not necessary, however, that faith in science should be either blind or unintelligent—inasmuch as it may be based on knowledge. So it is with respect to Spiritualism. We may believe it on the testimony of others, or we may put the question to nature, and ascertain the truth more directly. The latter is the plan I adopted, the results being such as I have previously recorded. These results leave not a shadow of doubt on my mind as to our being surrounded by invisible and intelligent beings, and as to the additional fact of our being able to communicate with them almost whenever we like.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. S.

Wollongong, April 30th.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

Amongst painters and poets there was one in the last generation who in a remarkable degree united both. This was William Blake, whose life may be found among Allan Cunningham's "Lives of the Painters," which has recently been written again by Mr Gilchrist, and edited by his widow. Blake was a medium long before mediums were talked of. He was born in Broad-street, Carnaby Market, London, in 1757, and apprenticed to an engraver, because his father found it too expensive to give him a regular artistic education. Blake not only painted and engraved his own designs, but wrote poems at once simple to an extreme degree and spiritual in the highest tone. Of course, everybody considered him crazy, and yet there was scarcely anyone of any pretensions to taste who did not regard his productions as inspired as they were strange to them. He did not attempt to conceal the fact that he received his poems and paintings, which illustrated each other, from friendly spirits whom he declared that he saw and conversed with. Amongst these was the spirit of his brother Robert, who had been his great favourite when on earth; and he says that when he had written and painted his first remarkable work, "The Songs of Innocence and Experience," and was in perplexity how best to engrave them, this spirit-brother communicated to him a peculiar process, by which it would be best effected. This process Blake kept entirely secret, and it is admitted to be perfectly original, and the reverse of the ordinary mode, leaving the copper-plate more like a stereotype or an engraved wood-block—not a plate engraved in the usual manner, for what the copperplate engraver sinks into the plate he left standing?

He asserted, what Sir Thomas Browne believed, that friendly spirits gave to artists and authors their best ideas. He declared that Homer, Plato, Moses, Pindar, Virgil, Dante, Milton, and many other of the great poets of the past, came and conversed with him, and sat to him whilst he sketched them. All such portraits display a character perfectly consonant to their historical one. Sometimes one or other of the spiritual world presented himself whilst other persons were with him, and he sketched them at once, to the amazement of the bystander. So he drew Lot, the Taskmaster of Egypt that Moses slew, William Wallace and Edward I.

Blake was of a most spiritual nature himself. He loved the beauties of earth, but could acquire no love for its wealth. He desired nothing more than the means of the simplest livelihood. "Were I to love money," he said, "I should lose all power of thought; desire of gain disorders the genius of man. My business is not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes, expressing godlike sentiments." It was the good fortune of Blake to find a wife who comprehended his unworldly nature, and had the most entire faith in all that he said of his spiritual revelations, though she was no medium herself, and saw and heard nothing. She was a most faithful and affectionate wife, assisting him in the labour of working off and tinting his plates, and cherishing him in all his difficulties and depressions, till she saw him pass to that world whence he had had his chief society. Amongst the fastest friends of Blake were Flaxman the sculptor and Fuseli the painter. The latter, as we have seen, was a Spiritualist, and, therefore, could understand and sympathise with Blake, and Flaxman was of a highly spiritual genius, and probably as much a Spiritualist as Blake, but too politic to avow it openly.

The principal works of Blake are the Songs of Innocence and Experience already mentioned; the Gates of Paradise; Urizen, the story of a wild, demoniac spirit; Illustrations of Blair's "Grave"; the Inventions of the Book of Job, Jerusalem, and Prophecies. In Blair's Grave, honest Allan Cunningham says "the flames in which the soul of the wicked man departs from the body have no warrant in the poem or belief!" But they have warrant in the revelations of modern mediums, and in the discoveries of Reichenbach. Blake undoubtedly saw that light which he drew, as the sensitives of Reichenbach sees it, and as many mediums see these beaming, flickering flames about living persons. Even Charles Lamb also thought him a most extraordinary man; describes his representation of death in Blair's Grave, thus:—"In one of his designs he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass—facsimile of itself—left behind on the deathbed." The words of Lamb show us how vague were the ideas of death and of soul before Swedenborg and the Spiritualists had stamped on our minds the great truth that the spirit is the true man, the body only its



envelope, and that the spirit is as visible and substantial to spirit as body is to body.

It is curious how the revelations of Spiritualists of all times agree in their facts. What Blake saw Swedenborg saw, and all great spirit-mediums have seen. Another fact noticed by Blake is that there are annoying and thwarting spirits. He asserted that the spirits of Chiaro-scuro were demons that persecuted him by tempting him to paint in oil, and to confound the clear, sharp outlines, which are the perfection of Art. Titian, he says, greatly tormented him, endeavouring to compel him to paint in oil, which he declared to be ruinous to true art, and never practised by Raphael or Michael Angelo. At times, Blake, like all other mediums, was deserted by his power, and sighed in vain to see or converse with a spirit. In some of his designs there is a wildness that is set down by the unspiritual as crazy, just as the visions of Ezekiel or Isaiah would be set down if the sacredness of the Bible did not protect them from it.

For a further acquaintance with this simple disciple of Christ and of art, this gentle, spiritual, sublimely ideal poet and painter, the reader must consult his works. These two little poems display at once his simplicity and his originality.—

Little lamb, who made thee?  
 Little lamb, who made thee?  
 Gave thee life, and bade thee feed  
 By the stream and o'er the mead;  
 Gave thee clothing of delight,  
 Softest clothing—woolly bright;  
 Gave thee such a tender voice,  
 Making all the vale rejoice?  
 Little lamb, who made thee?  
 Dost thou know who made thee?  
 Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
 Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
 He is called by thy name,  
 For he calls himself a lamb;  
 He is meek, and He is mild,  
 He became a little child;  
 I a child and thou a lamb,  
 We are called by his name.  
 Little lamb, God bless thee!  
 Little lamb, God bless thee!

## TIGER.

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
 In the forest of the night,  
 What immortal hand or eye  
 Framed thy fearful symmetry?  
 In what distant deeps or skies  
 Burned the fervour of thine eyes?  
 On what wings dare he aspire—  
 What the hand dare seize the fire?  
 And what shoulder and what art  
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
 When thy heart began to beat  
 What dread hand formed thy dread feet?  
 What the hammer—what the chain  
 Formed thy strength and forged thy brain?  
 What the anvil—what dread grasp  
 Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?  
 When the stars threw down their spheres,  
 And sprinkled heaven with shining tears,  
 Did he smile his work to see?  
 Did he who made the lamb make thee?

## THE BUNDLE OF CUT GRASS.

Among the many narratives of spiritual interest connected with the prophetic power sometimes exhibited by the dying, the writer has never observed the following valuable testimony to the truth of such an insight brought forward. It is of importance in several points of view, both from its historical interest and from the illustrious character of the narrator—the noblest ruler this country ever had—Oliver Cromwell. The writer therefore transcribes it for the benefit of Spiritualists, who may not possess the work in which it is contained.

Oliver Cromwell is writing to his worthy friend Oliver St. John, Esq., solicitor-general, from Knaresborough, the 1st September, 1648, immediately after the battle of Preston, in which the Duke of Hamilton and the Scots were totally defeated. Mr Carlyle, the elucidator of the Letters and Speeches, prefaces in his singular manner, the text of the letter itself, and the words are worth quoting. (Letters and Speeches Vol. I., page 300):—"Oliver St. John," writes Mr Carlyle, "a private friend, and always officially an important man, always on the committee of both kingdoms, Derby House Committee, or whatever the governing authority might be—finds here a private note for himself, one part of which is very strange to us. Does the reader look with any intelligence into that poor old prophetic, symbolic death-bed scene at Preston? Any intelligence of prophecy and symbol in general; of the symbolic man-child Mahershalal hashbaz at Jerusalem, or the handful of cut grass at Preston;—of the opening portals of eternity, and what last departing gleams there are in the soul of the pure and just?—Mahershalal hashbaz, ('Hasten to the spoil,' so-called), and the bundle of cut grass are grown somewhat strange to us! Read, and having sneered duly, consider."

After announcing the victory, and in his emphatic enthusiastic

manner giving the glory to God for his mercy in granting it, Oliver proceeds thus:—

"I am informed from good hands, that a poor godly man died in Preston the day before the fight, and being sick, near the hour of his death, he desired the woman that cooked to him to fetch him a handful of grass. She did so, and when he received it he asked whether it would wither or not, now it was cut? The woman answered "Yea." He replied, "So should this army of the Scots do, and come to nothing, so soon as ours did but appear," or words to this effect, and so immediately died."

So illustrious and well instructed a person deserves all credence—and we may well address the sceptics of our own day in the final words of Mr Carlyle—"Read, and having sneered duly, consider!"

KENNETH R. H. MACKENZIE.

Chiswick, July 24, 1864.

## Correspondence.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of correspondents.]

## THE BASIS OF SPIRITUALISM.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

SIR,—The basis of Spiritualism is science; and the embryotic spiritualist is sure to become a philosopher if he pursue his studies aright. Science is the knowledge of God and Nature; and the Spiritualist is placed in the best possible position to acquaint himself with the laws and operations of the universe, because he reads both the inner and outer sides of Nature, and finds unbroken harmony everywhere. In former ages the teachers of religion were the custodians of Nature's treasury of knowledge; and, like the Druids, they taught the people. But in subsequent times theology became a separate business, and science was left in the hands of men of another class, and too often thought to militate against the interests of religion. But all intelligent men in the religious world now profess that this idea is wrong; and they profess to encourage science, but place theology at the head of the list, making it alone essential to salvation, because they think theology is a revelation of God, and science they take to be the natural discoveries of men. All this has been proved practically untrue. Special revelations and schemes of salvation have long been cherished ideas; but we are in an era when these notions are losing their hold on the minds of all thinking men. Oh, how many schemes of salvation the world has been favoured with, which were never based on any science, but referred to the arbitrary will of the Deity! "By one man's sin death entered into the world." Geology says, "No, no," and Professor Owen says, "Don't believe it;" and the men who guard the old idea are afraid the news will spread too rapidly, and they would like to reconcile the two, but the thing is impossible. It is simply a mistake to say that death entered into the world by one man's sin; and if that is proved, the other follows; and if the arch has lost its keystone, it will fall. This shows the folly of building up a theology independent of strict science, which is the only sure guide; for though many good men are fully satisfied with the discrepancy, they don't know how to get out of it, fearing that what damages religion may be ruinous to themselves and the world. They can be entirely relieved from the difficulty by taking the fables on which such doctrines are founded, and putting them among the mythological lore of the nations, and ceasing to teach them. There is positive truth enough to teach, and an infinity of undiscovered knowledge waits the researches of man. What is called revealed knowledge is no more infallible than any other, wherever it may purport to come from. We have to prove all things. Had Spiritualists treated the dicta of spirits as many treat the teachings of the old prophets and apostles, there would have been much cause to complain, as error, in many cases, would have sprung up in ranker profusion than truth. But every truth spirits teach is subjected to the strictest scrutiny, and whatever is not compatible with other truths is rejected. Hence friendly criticism is always acceptable to Spiritualists, for their object is truth, which nothing can destroy. Spirits have taught opposite doctrines in our day, as well as in former times; but we are to judge, and science must be our guide. Differences among the spirits is only a matter of temporary inconvenience, arising from a want of knowledge. But if you dissent from theological views, you must consent to be damned, for that is one part of the scheme of salvation. By the way, you may be saved if you repent, when you take your ticket of leave. But that is a doctrine no spirits ever teach, for it never did any of them any good, as they full well know. Men grow out of evil just as they grow in knowledge; and evil is not forgiven till we are delivered from it, and lose all traces of its power over us. That is the rational doctrine of spirits, and it commends itself to all reasonable beings. The science of life here and hereafter must be taught rationally to be received by men of understanding; and it may easily be seen that the spirits have done very much already to establish a rational religion in the world, based on things as they are, and the facts of their own experience. I know the spirits are charged with not giving important revelations at all times, which occasionally subside into frivolities and lies, and this is thought to bring the whole thing into suspicion, and to take away from Spiritualism all pretension to scientific accuracy. All this is mystery to some, and a proof of delusion to others. But they can solve the mystery by getting at the spirit of Spiritualism. And as to delusion, they will find there is none except what previously existed in themselves. Mediumship is not always perfect, and that is a principal reason for all "ho lies and inaccuracies that occur; and the cause of the imperfect: an often arises

out of the surroundings. The medium is psychologised by the active and misdirected minds around him. This occurs particularly where a deep trance has not been superinduced. Besides many communications purporting to come from spirits are only partially so; they are more mediumistic than spiritual. Inspirational speaking amounts sometimes to little more, and sometimes to less than normal speaking. Inspirations come from all quarters, but often they are only the private opinions of men under a spiritual afflatus. The Jews had strange opinions, and the inspirations of Jesus Christ and the Apostles were based on some of them. They prophesied of the "sun being turned into darkness, and the moon into blood;" of the stars falling from heaven; and the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and whole heaps of such-like nonsense, all founded on Jewish fables. Now the science of this day precludes all that kind of romance, and we look for a prophet now to speak sense. They used to prophesy according to the proportion of faith; we, according to the proportion of knowledge. What exceeds that may be true, but it is most likely to be false. Inspiration is like physic; it may mend the matter, but it may increase the bad symptoms. So we advise people to be scientifically exact in their vaticinations, and to put their old books aside, till they have learned the art of prophesy themselves. They will then be able to account for the inaccuracies of scripture better than Griesbach. A. G.

### MY COUSIN'S DREAM.

BY W. T. HALEY.

About fifty years ago I was for some two years the guest of my uncle, a retired trader, in excellent circumstances, who lived on his own small and exceedingly pretty and well cultivated property in the neighbourhood of London.

The family consisted of my uncle, aunt, their daughter, and a couple of servants. It is of my cousin only that I have any occasion to make particular mention. Her father was a man of melancholic temperament, Spanish in countenance, and with the true hidalgo gravity of speech and lofty sternness of bearing. Her mother was a shrewd, cool, and somewhat lucre-loving little woman. This much is certain: my poor little cousin was about as little given to day-dreaming and fancying, and had as little love of learning and the learned, as any young, healthy and happy girl. She sang beautifully, was an admiring *pianiste*, and a most untiring dancer.

In the days of which I am writing, novel reading was by no means the sort of fashion it seems to be just now. "Thaddeus of Warsaw," "Wallace the Hero of Scotland," and that sort of thing, even varied by Dame Ratcliffe's "Italian" and "Mysteries of Udolpho," must have been, I trow, rather dreary temptations to young ladies to burn bed-curtains and themselves, as the result of "reading in bed." Assuredly, my dear little Cousin Mary was the very last of her sex to indulge in any such literary arson. She quite literally hated books, and "doted on" dancing and music. Can you fancy any one less likely to *dream prophetically*?

One lovely morning, I, in my early-rising fashion, had culled, in my dear old uncle's remarkably pretty flower-garden, a down-right beauty of a bouquet, which, as was usual with me, I presented to my pretty, wild, thoughtless little cousin, as she sat ready to show herself "on hospitable cares intent," at the breakfast-table. Instead of seeing the arch glance and hearing the merry and kindly though half-mocking laugh, I was shocked as she burst into almost hysterical sobbing, and said:

"Oh, Willie, dear, I have had an awful dream, and I know it will come true."

Need I tell any young male reader of this "owre true tale" what was the fashion in which I replied to a dearly beloved but very constantly "teased" cousin, who was "only a young girl"? Surely not.

At sixteen, what young man can enter truly and kindly into the dreams, real or unreal, of a "mere girl"? Perchance some may; assuredly at that time I could not. Age, sorrow, sickness, poverty and the hard dealings of a very hard world, have since softened my heart somewhat—perhaps even too much. But at that age I had for my poor cousin's wan face and nervous excitement only a boy's laugh and a boy's rude joke.

"Dream, eh? Capital, that! Come, Polly, let us have it. Out with it, little woman, and pray let it be precious horrible!"

Young, hardy, thoughtless as I then was, even I was melted well nigh to tears as the poor girl told me her dream, which, as I then knew psychology only as a Greek derivative, seemed to me to be about as likely of fulfilment as, for instance, the mountain coming to Mahomet.

My uncle's house was situated, as the French would phrase it, *entre cour et jardin*, and had a *porte cochere*, or carriage entrance, on one side of the house. My cousin had dreamed that she was suddenly seized by insanity; and that, after a severe struggle with her father—who literally idolized her, his only child, and the child of his more than middle age—he and the keepers from a London mad-house, had forced her, by the way of the *porte cochere*, into a carriage, in which she was conveyed to a mad-house; that she was treated there as (to my country's shame be it said!) the insane once were, and, (to my country's credit, be it added,) the insane are no longer treated; and that, after the suffering of more than a year, she was restored to reason and to misery by being

quite suddenly told that, in the agony of his grief for her worse than death, her father had, under the most frightful circumstances, committed suicide.

Now mark this, all you who believe that the workshop and the mart, the bargain and the sale, the strife for office and the chase after the almighty dollar, include our powers and our destinies—mark this: Just twelve months from that morning my uncle lay a mangled corpse, in his own beautiful home, and I and my cousin—restored from insanity, but oh, how sad!—knelt and prayed and wept beside him.

Let those who deny spiritual influences and spiritual revealings, let those who seem to think that we are wholly and solely "of the earth, earthy," account for this singular fulfilment of a dream. My cousin *had* struggled, *had* been forced into the carriage, *had* been most brutally tortured in a mad-house, and *had* been *shocked into sanity* by her poor father's suicide. Remember, my cousin was no novel reader, no *romantic young person*, no day-dreamer, but a mad-cap, as music and dance-loving a little lady as ever made a home happy, if happiness and song and music can be supposed to co-exist.

Explain it, I cannot; but the facts are just what I have stated. And I ask, How, if we are all "of the earth, earthy," shall we account for this revelation to the spirit by the spirit twelve months before the literal fulfilment of "a mere dream"?—*Herald of Progress*.

### THE ATHENÆUM ON "SPIRITUALISM—ITS FACTS AND PHASES," ETC.

What a pity we had not an earlier perusal of the *Athenæum* for April 23rd, 1864; but better late than never. Our little work, "Spiritualism—its Facts and Phases," &c., has fallen into strange hands, and various have been the opinions expressed upon the subject which it aims at defending, and various, too, have been the arguments in favour of and against the book itself. Reviewers are neither just nor clever at all times. The spirit of fair-play does not always hover about them. We extract this pithy piece of skilful criticism as being a strong one-sided opinion of the writer:—

"A more pitiable testimony to the superstitions of the times, dragging those who embrace them to the very verge of sanity, has not been given out than this new book. It is a book to make the 'heart ache; since small hope is to be entertained that the absurd exhibition of credulity which it contains will make the more educated and intellectual confess their mistake.'"

To the writer of the review we tender our thanks, although we, being interested, cannot fully appreciate all the pungency and witicism it contains. Will our readers kindly refer to the passage we have quoted? Is there not enough here to make the writer's "heart ache," and to give "small hope" that his "absurd" remarks either evince "sanity," or are calculated to make the more educated and intellectual Spiritualists confess their mistake? "A more pitiable testimony" to the ignorance of the writer than this review we have not seen. Only a few weeks ago the *Athenæum* took upon itself to give an opinion on Mr Brevior's "Two Worlds." We noticed in this case a similar incapacity on the part of the writer to touch the spiritual philosophy. What a farce is enacted when writers assume a knowledge they do not possess. All they can do is to abuse Spiritualists, and banter about the ludicrous side of the subject, whilst they studiously avoid being straightforward and earnest in the cause of truth. Set the *Athenæum's* banter and abuse, which count for nothing, on one side, and what has it done to affect Spiritualism? Simply nothing. If our little book were simply a collection of the most extravagant and unreliable statements, which it is not, the *Athenæum*, having denounced and laughed at the book, would then need to meet the Spiritual subject fairly, or to nurse its inability in silence. We have not the ghost of a shade of ill temper with the writer, because we feel confident he did his work hurriedly and in ignorance. It is a pity, however, that reviewing should be done slovenly and with bad taste. Our little work may, or may not, cause the "educated and intellectual to confess their mistake." Neither that nor other works on Spiritualism seem to effect the one desirable purpose of causing the writer in the *Athenæum* to confess his mistake. This may be accounted for, not because he is educated and intellectual, but *vice versa*. When the casting-up day comes round for the clever writers who follow in the track of the *Athenæum*, it will be a woful day for them. They will cut sorry figures in the light of spiritual fact. We wonder they do not already recede in the shade lest too long exposure to the sun should too speedily melt the ice about their hearts.

### THE BEAUTIFUL.

Thou can'st not clasp the beautiful,  
And call it all thine own;  
The beautiful is given for all,  
And not for one alone.  
It is God's love made visible  
In earth, and sea, and sky,  
A blessing wide as time and space,  
For every human eye.

Mr B. M. ROUNE, developing medium, from America, may be seen at T. Heatherley's, Esq., 79, Newman Street, Oxford Street. No charge made, but persons may give as they are moved.

## THE MEDIUMS.

## AN ORIGINAL SPIRITUAL TALE.

BY J. H. POWELL.

## CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

It was strange the members of Zion Chapel applauded his doctrines; yet, in scarcely an instance, did they put them in practice. Their children still ran in the garden or meadow; skipped about, built houses of toys, and did all the other little things which amuse children; and those who had the misfortune to see their little ones close their mortal eyes for ever, never for a moment, believed them heirs of damnation. Thus the natural parental instincts were stronger than the teachings of the pulpit.

Very similar was the instinctive feeling of Mrs Bates when Mr Pearman designated Humphrey Villa a "devil's den." She had a word to say in defence of her master, and Emily, and Ada. Mr Pearman might talk till doomsday, yet he could never change her heart. She loved the household which had been her special charge for years, and could not, for the life of her, see, because the "orrible spirits" had come, that Mr Humphrey was not the same good, kind master he had always been.

The Rev. Thomas Pearman rose and took his departure very much chagrined at not finding a speedy solution to the problem of how to possess the housekeeper's £200. His mind was so much perplexed with the difficulties of the subject that he went away without giving the good woman a parting salutation. She thought it strange; but never guessed at the cause. The one link which connected her with Humphrey Villa saved her. Had her affections for the family been less strong, there is little doubt but she would have been the Rev. Mr Pearman's victim. She was saved without a conception of it. Her idol minister had to scheme and preach for weary months to come to find himself as far as ever from the object of his hopes.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mr Jeremiah Forbes reached London full of satisfaction. He had never, he thought, been happier, except when he was at Gravesend, than he had been during his sojourn with Mr Humphrey. He walked rapidly along over London Bridge, playing with his walking-stick, and smoking his last Cuba. The lamps were all lit, and the crowds of people thronging the streets passed rapidly to and fro, at least as rapidly as they could, since human difficulties constantly barred the way to human designs. He did not particularly care to reach his chambers before midnight. It was about eight o'clock. He walked on past the Bank into the City-road. Standing in front of a Coffee House, he read the announcement, "*A Discussion on Modern Spiritualism this evening, to be opened by Mr Philas Polax. To commence at half-past eight o'clock.*" It did not take much time to find Mr Forbes comfortably seated inside. He called for tea, eggs, and toast, indulging his palate at the double expense of his purse and patience. With nearly four hours untaxed, and a desire for excitement, it was just the thing for Mr Jeremiah Forbes to have in anticipation an intellectual treat. He finished his tea, toast, and eggs, and began to look about him, wondering in his mind whether Mr Philas Polax was among the company assembled, bent upon diminishing certain quantities of cake and coffee, if not on annihilating for ever the popular spiritual heresies of the day. To describe the complexions of the various persons present would be a task, for they were of all types and temperaments. There were the sanguine-nervous, bilious-nervous, sanguine-lymphatic, and the highly-nervous; the tall, middle, and low statures, and their ages differed like their noses. Their dresses, perhaps, were most alike, being mostly of seedy black. Mr Forbes could not help it if he was lonely, because he was pre-disposed constitutionally to reserve of manners. He was not bashful, not in the least; yet he did not usually demonstrate much personal importance in the presence of

strangers. If he were called upon to give an opinion, he betrayed the utmost *nonchalance* while he expressed himself unreservedly careless of either the opinions of others, or what might be the consequence of the expression of his own. Not caring to introduce himself, Mr Forbes thought he would watch the proceedings in a quiet corner where he was not likely to be observed. The time for opening the debate came. A bulky gentleman, wearing glasses, introduced Mr Philas Polax. The individual claiming the honour of that name obtruded himself suddenly upon the waiting gaze of his auditory. He was tall, slim, and dark, with an amusing lisp in his accent, which somewhat resembled an awkward impediment in his stature, which was not straight—like a lamp-post, but awkwardly crooked. He drew himself as upright as the curve of his body would admit, and in a deliberate and loud voice said—

"Mr Chairman, friends, and citizens of this vast metropolis,—the subject I am called upon to open is one calling for your most solemn attention. I am here this evening to lay bare the bosom of deception, to open the veins of imprudent chicanery, to probe the depths of ignorant credulity. Would you believe it, friends, that, after all the teachings of Christianity and philosophy, after nearly nineteen centuries of learning, the people of this favoured country, this enlightened emporium, wherein are presented mechanical achievements, scientific attainments, and philosophical wisdom, not to be fully conceived of even—I say, with all sorrow, would you believe it, friends, there are to be found fools, who are dubbed wise men, and women, devoted to the modern bugbear, Spiritualism? It will be my pleasing task to chop down this upas of the nineteenth century with the sharp axe of logic. I shall be able to show, to the satisfaction of all present who can claim to be citizens of this vast metropolis, that there is a set of impostors calling themselves mediums."

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed a square-headed, good-tempered man of about forty, who sat near the speaker.

Mr Philas Polax continued—"Yes; impostors, friends, called mediums, who gull the public by pretending to hold intercourse with the spirits of the departed. Can you imagine—can any true-born citizen imagine—that men with flesh and blood can see anything else, or speak to anything else than matter? Spirit, friends—what is spirit? You cannot answer me. Can it be touched with material fingers? Can it be seen with material eyes? Can it give forth vocal sounds? You know it cannot; therefore, why need we, with our present enlightenment, waste time discussing the nature of the so-called spirit movement? I confess, friends, I should not have conceived it worth my while opening this debate had it not been for our valued friend, Mr Somes, who has so often related to us details of what he terms spiritual manifestations, that I felt it my duty to come forward, and, with a strong, steady stroke of the axe of logic, to lay this upas low. Well, now, to proceed, it has been my pleasing mission, of late years, to visit the houses of many professed Spiritualists—not in the capacity, as you know, of city missionary, but in the more commanding character of tax collector: that is the peculiar occupation that occupies my time. I sometimes collect old debts for a consideration. But to the purpose, when I have been to the houses of Spiritualists, I have invariably found that the taxes were paid on the instant. This is not the case with other houses. Why, may I enquire, friends, does this prodigality of cash manifest itself in conjunction with spirit, but that there is some method these mediums have of turning over the siller quicker than most people? Hence arises suspicion of the probable cause—trickery. I further urge, in support of my view, this great fact: you don't hear of our Court encouraging spirit-rapping. It finds little favour with the English aristocracy generally. It finds more encouragement from necromancers, who understand its mechanical mysteries. Besides, what bosh there is in the statements that spiritualists make respecting the natural and special individual qualifications of mediums! I want to know, friends, how it is this table [he banged his hand down upon a table near him] does not rise, and kick out answers to questions I may put here as well as my going to the houses of professional mediums like that arch impostor, Jeremiah Forbes, at Lincoln's Inn, and paying a guinea for an hour's sitting?"

(To be continued in our next.)

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